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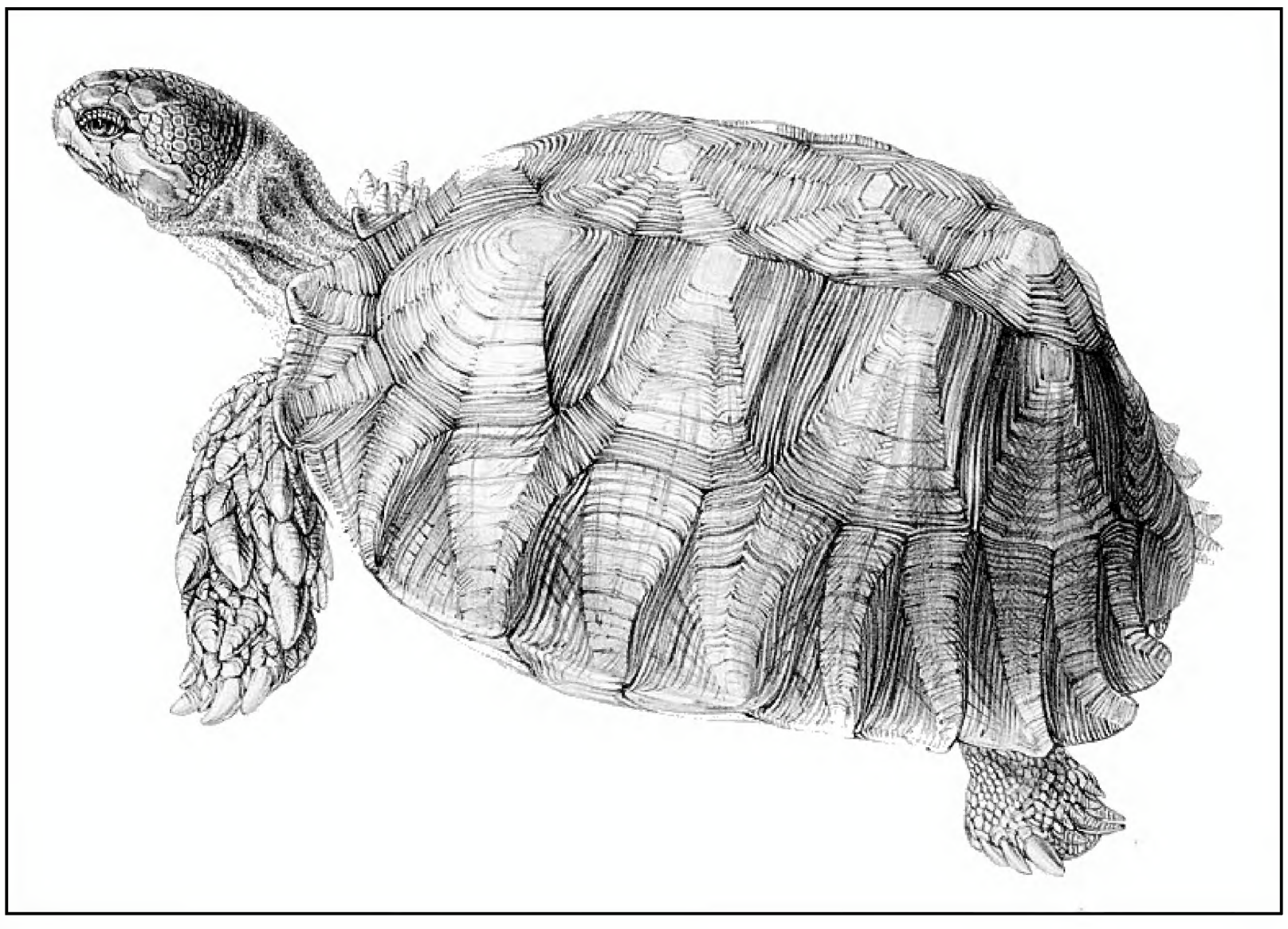

BULLETIN OF THE CHICAGO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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Book Review: *Stolen World: A Tale of Reptiles, Smugglers, and Skullduggery* by Jennie Erin Smith 2011. Crown Publishers, New York. 336 pp. ISBN 978-0-307-38147-7 $25*

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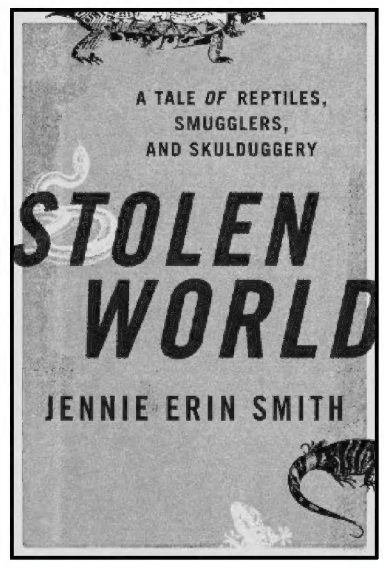
Tortoises, Iguanas, and Vipers; Oh MY!!



They were all born a generation late. Growing up reading Frank Buck's *Bring 'em Back Alive* and Raymond Ditmars' *Thrills of a Naturalist's Quest* was inspiring to teenagers of the '50s, but the world had changed by the time they became young adults. There were few remaining unexplored corners of the world, and adventures became more focused on scientific quests — academic team efforts supported by grants with specific missions. The world of individual freelance adventure had become tamed by quick, efficient international travel and TV documentaries. And collecting animals was now cumbersome, what with all the need for permits and a fast growing list of totally protected species. What's an adventurous herpetologist wannabe going to do? Seek adventure of course; there were still places to go, and rare reptiles to acquire, while the growing number of new international laws to bypass made the task even more exciting. Protecting various species from commercial exploitation increased their retail values exponentially. The quests continue, perhaps no longer for fame and glory, but the next best thing—the fun of lawless adventure and cash.

Welcome to the worlds of Hank Molt, Tom Crutchfield and Anson Wong, reptile smugglers extraordinaire. Smith's book recounts a series of interwoven stories of their lives, spanning half a century of scams and other global misadventures. The illicit reptile hunters become the hunted as wildlife agents try to crack down on the smuggling rings, yet even after terms of imprisonment and financial ruin, the tales of recurring deviate behavior continue. This book is a tour of the dark side of the convoluted exotic pet industry.

These individuals—each with his own unique aberrant personality—are constantly scheming, stabbing each other in the back, and coining nonsensical lines like "Conservation through commercialization." Molt and Crutchfield strive for recognition in the real world. Squandering their time in rivalry and again and again plunging into shady deals and illegal activities in a competition to see who can get the best and rarest of creatures becomes their diving force. The line "There is honor among thieves" never applies to these guys. Gad, and you thought reptiles were creepy and scary. The main characters, because they are wrong on so many levels, hold your interest.

Molt and Crutchfield spend much of their time scamming each other, screwing their suppliers, and dealing with their legal woes. And what about their customers? Do those purchasing wildlife not care that they are supporting and indirectly endorsing criminal behavior? Or, that many of the snakes, lizards and turtles they are purchasing arrived in this country illegally? The commercial exploitation of wildlife clearly needs better controls, international laws that can be enforced, and properly worded and consistent state regulations that prevent reptile dealers from playing games of interstate hide-and-seek with their inventory.

While profiting from the illegal wildlife trade, the same importers are also selling many legally acquired species, though based on the obscene numbers marketed many would still question the ethics of even this. In reality these guys are quite knowledgeable about the individual species themselves, and if you were to meet them they are personable, have a good sense of humor, and can be quite charming—all positive attributes that combine to make them successful at what they do. In addition to the lead characters—Molt, Crutchfield, and Wong—there is a whole supporting cast that learned well from their mentors. As the senior characters step aside or go to jail, their shoes are quickly filled by capable understudies. Some were already stealing from their bosses even while they were still their apprentices.

One of the interesting aspects of this book is its tracking the modern-day, rapidly evolving, history of exotic animal supply, herpetology, the role of public institutions, regulatory agencies, and the emerging interest in private sector herpetoculture. It was a changing world for Molt, Crutchfield, Wong and the others, one they needed to constantly renegotiate in order to stay in tune with the interests of hobbyists, and avoid the reach of strengthening international wildlife laws. Somewhere in the '80s a small cottage industry went mainstream. Mailed price lists were replaced by faxed ones, insuring more rapid sales of valuable inventory. With the Internet, sales often became instantaneous. Captive breeding, weekend reptile trade shows in every part of the country, high-end color morphs, advertising in magazines that specialized in captive reptiles, credit cards and money wire transfers, and laundering forbidden species through various ports all became part of the economic formula. The smugglers were adaptable and successful.

While the author stops short of direct indictment of zoos in schemes to import illegally obtained reptiles, a close reading of her book shows that some of our major zoos helped create paperwork that allowed for export, purchased animals from the smugglers themselves, and used their influence within the con-

servation community to acquire illegally obtained animals from confiscations. Much of this was done in the name of captive breeding and conservation. The zoo community has since done much to cleanse public images tarnished by U.S. Fish and Wildlife investigations, but it is interesting to see that Smith's documentation of zoo curators' zeal for rare species of questionable origin was not particularly different from that of the smugglers. Even today zoos continue to obtain wild-caught animals from dealers, but get around the concept of purchase by paying the dealers and collectors only for their "time and effort," not the animal itself and they make sure the export paperwork is in order.

The lead characters fancy themselves as having rock star status among some elements of the herp hobbyist community, and I suspect some people do see them this way—modern day Billy the Kids and Bonnie and Clydes. Instead of robbing banks they rob jungles and national parks in foreign lands. Unfortunately, most of today's herp hobbyists are more likely to know the identity of the smugglers and dealers than the contributions of Carr, Auffenberg, Pope or Klauber. At the last Daytona Reptile Expo the star smugglers could be found autographing copies of *The Lizard King*, yet another book featuring the escapades of felonious smugglers, and they were seen wearing custom-made tee shirts with slogans that, while humorous, boldly spit in the eye of wildlife enforcement agents.

While the book focuses on the smugglers and their supporting accomplices, the larger problems are inherently addressed as well, and should not be overlooked. We are dealing with a growing market for rare and illegally obtained species, clients that have little regard for conservation ethics, or even the species they are compelled to possess. And, more importantly, we are dealing with a maze of porous international and state wildlife laws and ineffective enforcement. The smugglers can often remain ahead of agents with creative paperwork, reporting inaccurately the sites of collection, using countries with less stringent export laws, and playing games with phony zoo uniforms and labeling wild-caught animals as ones of captive-bred origins. Our current wildlife laws need to become more clear-cut, universal in intent, and supported equally by all nations.

The excellent descriptions of the smugglers themselves are captivating almost to a fault. It's easy to get caught up in the rogue lives of the characters and one may forget the major conservation and legal issues that form the basis of this tale. These people are stealing rare and endangered wildlife out of their natural homes and turning them into black market commodities. And more importantly these are but a few of a multitude of players in a billion dollar business that annually imports millions of reptiles and amphibians just into the U.S. The importers we never hear about are likely an even bigger problem—commercial dealers who wisely have continued to maintain a low profile. The overall world market adds another order of magnitude to the figures. The fact that our featured smugglers carry large knives and enjoy the company of moonlight ladies, while interesting, is actually a very minor part of the overriding issue.

If I were still teaching, this book would be required reading for my students. And it's not just a book for zoology majors, the text should also be of interest to people involved in environmental policy, international law, regulatory and enforcement agencies, those keeping reptiles and amphibians, and students of pathological and psychological disorders. In the introduction the author dedicates the book to her late grandmother "who liked her stories a little on the rough side." Her grandmother would have really enjoyed this book.

Reading assignments may not be necessary; I suspect that we can look forward to the day when *Stolen World* becomes the basis of our newest soap opera. Seriously! It has all the required elements: creepy characters, narcissistic misfits, failed romance, prostitution, heavy drinking, smuggling and other felonious activities, enforcement heroes who are usually one step behind the villains, views of life in third world prisons, endless plots and schemes, comical stupidity, greed, court cases and gifts of Rolex watches all woven into a world full of illegal and dangerous reptiles. This will be a TV program that is not likely to run out of topics for new episodes for years to come. And as a true story, based on proven repeat offenders, it is likely to continue on for decades. Glen Frey's *Smuggler's Blues* would make a good theme song.

I should point out that the author spent ten years interviewing people, reading court records, and rechecking her sources, prior to writing *Stolen World*. To vouch for the authentic nature of the text it's interesting to note that months prior to production Anson Wong was convicted of illegal wildlife trafficking, some of the people featured in the various chapters attempted to legally block the book from going to press, and others based on Internet chatter are quite unhappy with the content and the author. It's interesting to see them try to hatefully label her as an animal rights person. This is clearly not Smith's focus; she is simply providing an in-depth account of interwoven events and activities. I wonder if there will be a second volume, God knows there is enough additional material for one, and the story line continues. Rating: 4.5 star tortoises!

Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 46(1):3-5, 2011

Book Review: *Forbidden Creatures: Inside the World of Animal Smuggling and Exotic Pets* by Peter Laufer. 250 pp. 2010. Lyons Press, Guilford, Connecticut ISBN-13: 978-1599219264 Hardcover $19.95*

* This and many other books and products are available at Amazon.com. If you first visit the CHS website, www.chicagoherp.org, and then use the Amazon icon you find there to enter Amazon's site, any purchases you make will help to support the CHS.

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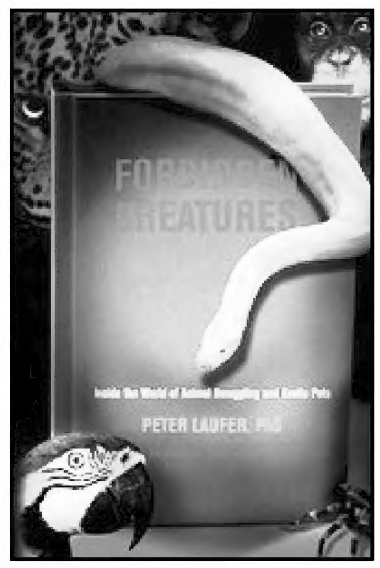
All good things are wild and free. Henry David Thoreau



Although only a few chapters are devoted specifically to reptiles, readers with interest in herpetoculture, herpetology and herp-related global conservation issues will find this book compelling. The nature of underworld wildlife smuggling and the traits that drive seemingly normal people to possess exotic, often dangerous, wildlife as personal pets gets a thorough examination.

Award winning journalist Peter Laufer builds on personal interviews with people obsessed with their exotic pets, the outlaws who rob our planet of its wildlife, dealers and breeders, as well as with people opposed to exotic pet ownership. While Laufer clearly has a personal view as to what he thinks of the large dangerous exotic pet trade, his interviews are fair and present dignified opinions supporting all sides of the issues. Well, it would have been interesting if he could have also interviewed some from the group that has the most invested in all this—the animals. We will just have to assume we understand their perspective. It's a great book in that it makes readers think about and reassess, or perhaps refocus on, their existing opinions. It got my attention. This is good journalism, not a book filled with rambling generalities, but one built on specific examples—many of which are verifiable jewels, real people, and actual captive animals—often with names. *Forbidden Creatures* is well indexed and a list of sources documents the text.

This is not an animal right treatise, though the animal rights people will find much information to champion their cause. The focus is exotic pets and gets to the heart of the question as to who wants 'em, and why. While it's difficult to explain why you have a household chimp, or a 12-foot crocodile living in your basement, the author interviews people who try to justify these pets. Issues unfold as one reads through each chapter. The species are different but there is much overlap in the pet owners' justifications. Readers will pick up this book with their various, and perhaps biased perspectives; however, all should become more sensitized to the needs of the creatures themselves.

The author addresses the dangers in keeping exotic pets, not theoretical concerns but actual cases such as pet chimps going bananas and killing people. In one case the culprit was a pet chimp that would regularly sit in bed with his owner sipping wine out of a stemmed glass. In another, two marauding chimps attacked a California man. He barely escaped after losing much of his face, a foot and his testicles. And there is much more—mauling lions and tigers, kinkajous gone wild, and a Burmese python smothering a two-year-old. The list of recent documented cases is not inclusive, but the ones presented make their point. All accidental encounters? What is accidental about a wild animal behaving like it's a wild animal? They do totally unexpected things—like try to escape.

Forbidden Creatures discusses a number of other issues: the ethics as well as the legality of exotic pets, the distinction between pets and ownership, the concept of private animal collections, the distinction between domestic and feral, and captive-bred versus wild-caught pets. The word "pet" itself is perhaps a dubious one when it comes to wild creatures. I recently read an article in one of the reptile hobbyist trade magazines describing corn snakes as our first domestic reptile, an interesting concept and perhaps a scary futuristic trend.

Another issue raised by the author is what quality of life do many of these exotic captives have. Collections of freshwater turtles or boas in rows of 10- and 20-gallon aquariums with nothing in the aquarium but glass walls are testament to the owners' selfishness. The issues for the captives are general ones—space to move about, and boredom. The problem is not limited to private collections or sleazy roadside zoos. For decades the museum where I worked had a large reticulated python on display in a box that was about 3 by 6 feet. Finally after years of complaints from museum visitors the snake's living quarters were upgraded to a hexagonal glass cage. It was still way too small for a 14-foot python: there was a lot of vertical space, but the snake never used it. It would remain in a coil for weeks on end and visitors often asked if it was "real." The snake came to life every few weeks when it was tossed a live rabbit. A few months back I visited the Miami Seaquarium. A group of six manatees were exhibited in a deep circular tank that had obviously been designed for some smaller marine creatures. The manatees floated near the surface and except for taking an occasional breath of air, they looked to be in suspended animation, lifeless. Their bulky 8- to 12-foot bodies touched as they filled a big percentage of their pool. One could also view the lack of activity from an underwater perspective. All were rehab animals, survivors of boat strikes, sporting unhealed scars, living out their life of confinement. With life spans reaching perhaps 40–50 years these creatures did not have much to look forward to. The manatees were expressionless,

and I noted that a number of the people peering down into the exhibit looked sad. I suspect this and similar exhibits were the reason I needed to sign an agreement with the Seaquarium prohibiting me from sharing my photos in any public format.

What drives the need for ownership of exotic pets? The answers are as varied as the people being asked the question: some think they are cute; some like the responsibility; some feel sorry for them, and of course for some there is the macho, thriller aspect of "owning" a top-order predator. The author provides an uncensored opportunity to see the minds of people who feel compelled to keep large, often dangerous, exotic pets. The fact some of the animals are illegal as well as dangerous seems to add to, perhaps even drive the attraction.

And where are the lines drawn between a hobby, a sizeable and growing collection, compulsive behavior, obsession and hoarding? Are there any? Somewhere along this path building an animal collection becomes a personality disorder. Back in grade school days I had a friend with a huge snake collection. Much of it was comprised of venomous species, and at one time he had live examples of all the species and subspecies of rattlesnakes. Row upon row of cages filled his city basement and not a single snake had enough cage space to even partly straighten out. Cages with loosely coiled snakes, newspaper substrate and partly filled water dishes were lined up in rows like library shelves. Fifty years later his interests shifted to cats . . . house cats, stray ones he adopted in his neighborhood. Even he does not know how many wander through his townhous—at least 50, perhaps 75. New litters of kittens are showing up weekly and litter boxes are everywhere awaiting their daily cleaning. Where exactly does our love of animals and possessing them start to border on well-intended abuse?

With such things in mind the author examines the general personalities of the people keeping big exotic pets and personal menageries. Our attempts to cultivate relationships with wild creatures transcend all cultures and all levels. Is there that much difference between a high school student with a pet goat-eating python, Siegfried and Roy making an unpredictable tiger perform tricks before audiences at the Mirage Casino in Las Vegas, or Michael Jackson's personal zoo? The author points out that contemporary celebrities and drug dealers with their exotic pets follow a trend established historically by the rich and powerful. Evidence in Egyptian tombs dating back to 2,500 B.C. shows that royalty collected and maintained wild animals on a regular basis. It's some sort of status thing I suppose.

After some time, most sensible people realize they are unable to adequately care for their wild pets. They outgrow their quarters, never tame down, don't get along with the family dog; the list of reasons is seemingly endless, but at the same time sounds very familiar. Eventually people discover that you simply can't raise chimps as children, or that the screams of their neurotic parrot have reached nightmare levels. Because of this, a number of sanctuaries for the unwanted animals have been founded. In most cases these are created by caring people who see the need to look after orphaned wildlife. There are sanctuary programs for everything from big cats to Russian tortoises. In addition there are all sorts of private animal rescue groups who take in and attempt to adopt out everything from cage birds to iguanas and other reptiles. For the most part these are all well intended programs, but some have grown into part time businesses or are little more than lures for donations. Often the people running them themselves become obsessed with hoarding large volumes of creatures and provide adequate but minimal care. Several zoos and other organizations have established annual amnesty days where local people can turn in various legal and illegal wildlife with no questions asked. In addition there are organized programs run by nonprofits trying, for example, to put a stop the sales of big cats to the general public. Nonetheless, the problem is growing and those offering solutions are typically overwhelmed. As the author points out: "How can we repair the fact that we have taken these animals from their natural habitat?"

All this is a real issue. Judgment and common sense are hampered by personal perspectives and self-serving justification, not just for the pet owners but for those who are totally opposed to exotic pets. For the most part the problem has grown from a lack of regulation, porous laws that vary widely between states, and limited enforcement of legislation and ordinances that can help. While regulations vary widely from state to state, in most cases they are inadequate for enforcement of proper housing and treatment, and keeping wild animals does not violate current federal laws. The federal Animal Welfare Act only requires that the animal can stand and turn about in its cage. The keeping of large dangerous exotic pets is far more widespread than most realize. It is estimated that there are more than 5,000 captive-bred tigers, two times more than exist in the wild. The number of captive tigers in Texas alone may represent more than are in the wild. Want to buy a large wild animal for a back yard pet? Look no further than the Internet.

Big snakes as pets and the problems they have created are the topic of three chapters. Laufer provides credible accounts of the pythons that have become established in the Everglades and other parts of south Florida. And he places the problem in perspective. We all have a general idea as to how much food is required for a single adult captive python, one that does little more than wait in a coil between meals. Imagine how much a wild one needs and then multiply that times the various estimates as to the number of invasive pythons currently in the Everglades, 15,000, 50,000, 150,000. Even at the lowest estimates these snakes present a real problem. We know they are relatively long lived and continue to reproduce—they not only have the potential of becoming a major problem, they have become one. In this particular case the herpetoculture community and the importers and distributors need to accept responsibility. But let's not lose sight of the real culprit, the regulatory agencies that had the authority, but not the foresight, to prevent the problem in the first place.

The issues of exotic pets start with those profiting from their sales—the importers, distributors and breeders. The standards for levels of responsibility are low to nonexistent, and their marketing is deceptive—often skirting the few laws and regulations that are in place. Most states only have statute authority to protect and regulate their native species and the industry takes full advantage of this. Add to the commotion Internet sales. We have all seen the reptile sales, but did you know you can find

almost any animal you might want if you go to the right web site: sloths, spider monkeys, dromedary camels, red kangaroos, or how about a Grant's zebra. It's unfortunate that this book had gone to press prior to the raid on Global Exotics. In December 2009, US Global Exotics, a wholesale distributor of wild-caught exotic animals was raided and thousands of creatures were seized from their Arlington, Texas, warehouse. The animals confiscated were taken because of the deplorable conditions in which they were kept, not because they were illegally acquired. The owner's defense was that a 40% mortality of wild caught imports was the norm for the industry.

I am not a person who is an advocate for government control over our personal decisions, but as Laufer suggests here is an emerging case where an organization needs to step in and set some guidelines, and if that fails tough regulations. Many of us would agree that teenagers driving and texting is not a good thing, and most are willing to accept legislation that prohibits it, even if the decision and enforcement impacts us occasionally. The same is true of drinking and driving, it infringes on our rights, but the intended result makes common sense. The guy down the block may have the 12-foot Nile crocodile in his backyard pool well contained, but the people across the street with the Bengal tigers worry me. If resolving this situation means I can no longer breed gaboon vipers in my basement, I understand. Okay, this sentence will read as politically, or at least socially, incorrect, but in many cases we are discussing scary trailer-park menageries. The ethics of living creatures spending their total existence in what is the equivalent of third world jail cells combined with the conservation concerns associated with acquisition of wild-caught animals should make caring people take notice. The human mind can rationalize and justify almost anything, its time to step back and take a hard look at the issues. Do we really need to keep a Burmese python and then stock a freezer full of rabbits to feed it? As the author points out, why should our Everglades National Park have to deal with a growing population of discarded and escaped pet pythons?

There are all levels of discussions from extremely diverse voices as to what constitutes a civil society. The majority of which include serious thought as to the importance of how we treat the follow creatures that share our world. This is something deeper than the various organizations supporting animal rights; it's about us and our regard for the earth's other inhabitants. Can they simply be reduced to personal property? Generations of tigers sequestered in dog pens don't cut it, nor should corn snakes living their entire lives in plastic shoe boxes, where often their highlight of the week is when they manage to tip over the water bowl. Okay, I get it—as they grow they get promoted to sweater boxes, but you see my point.

This book is but one of several that serve as ongoing indictments against the wild-caught reptile and amphibian trade: *The Lizard King*, *The Last Tortoise*, and Jenny Smith's *Stolen World*. While the book being reviewed is almost a philosophical exposé on exotic pets, Smith's book focuses directly on the aberrant personalities of herp smugglers. Both are important contributions. But my question is, how many of these books will it take before we are willing to resolve the problems caused by the international trade of these animals? The issues are exposed and by now should all be well known. And there is a vast area of middle ground that we can all strive for. So you are a wildlife smuggler, distributor, dealer, advocate of a personal wild-caught pet menagerie, someone who has to deal with the negative impacts of established populations of introduced herps, or a keeper of exotic wildlife: read the book, perhaps it will lead toward some needed self-evaluation. The book is thought provoking; astute hobbyists will see bits and pieces of themselves throughout the pages.

As I finished this review I looked for an appropriate shelf in my library to house the book and I ran across three volumes written in the '50s and early '60s—the *Born Free* series by Joy Adamson. These are books full of keen, unsentimental observations of free-ranging lions written near the end of the heyday of big game hunting. Laufer has shown us what a long, long, backward road many have traveled in their attempts to appreciate, understand and get close to wildlife.

Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 46(1):6-7, 2011

Herpetology 2011

In this column the editorial staff presents short abstracts of herpetological articles we have found of interest. This is not an attempt to summarize all of the research papers being published; it is an attempt to increase the reader's awareness of what herpetologists have been doing and publishing. The editor assumes full responsibility for any errors or misleading statements.

DARWIN'S PET TORTOISE REDISCOVERED

A. M. Bauer and C. J. McCarthy [2010, Chelonian Conservation and Biology 9(2):270-276] note that during the voyage of the *Beagle*, Charles Darwin collected a single juvenile tortoise from James (San Salvador or Santiago) Island in the Galápagos Archipelago. This specimen, often referred to as Darwin's "pet" tortoise was returned alive to England along with 3 other small tortoises and examined by J.E. Gray. The subsequent fate of the specimen has been the source of much speculation, and recent popular publications have variously proposed that the tortoise was transported to Australia (where it supposedly lived to an age of more than 175 years) or that it remained in England but disappeared without a trace. The authors discovered that Darwin's pet was indeed registered into the British Museum collection in 1837 and that it is still extant and clearly labeled on the inner face of the plastron as BMNH 1837.8.13.1 from James Island. These data were overlooked for more than 170 years, and 3 curators (Gray, Günther, and Boulenger) who published chelonian catalogues between 1844 and 1889 all failed to recognize this specimen as Darwin's tortoise, mentioning it only as a stuffed juvenile of unknown provenance. Günther referred the specimen to his newly erected *Testudo ephippium*, subsequently regarded as endemic to Abingdon (Pinta) Island, but confirmation of the specimen's James Island origin implies that Darwin's pet tortoise is, appropriately, referable to *Chelonoidis darwini*.

COLOR CHANGES IN BOA CONSTRICTORS

S. M. Boback and L. M. Siefferman [2010, J. Herpetology 44(4): 506-515] note that physiological color change and geographic variation in coloration are well documented in several squamate lineages, having presumably evolved for cryptic, sexual signaling, and thermoregulatory functions. Only 11 snake species have demonstrated physiological color change, although anecdotal reports suggest it may be present in additional species. The authors describe color variation and physiological color change in island and mainland populations of *Boa constrictor* using full-spectrum reflectance spectrometry. Boas from island and mainland localities exhibited physiological color change, and this change occurred on a diel cycle. Boas from both locations were lighter at night and darker during the day. The magnitude of the color change differed between two principal components axes. Although change in brightness was similar for boas on the islands and the mainland, the change in chroma was greater in boas from the mainland. Color also varied seasonally; boas were lighter in color and reflected more long-wavelength light during the wet season than during the dry season in Belize. The authors feel that a fundamental hormone cycle (melatonin/melanophore stimulating hormone) present in a wide variety of vertebrates, underlies the physiological color change in snakes. If so, color change may be more widespread than previously realized, and the perceptual bias of the human vision system may have caused researchers to discount its presence in snakes.

HOW TO HELP AMPHIBIANS CROSS ROADS

D. A. Patrick et al. [2010, J. Herpetology 44(4):618-626] note that efficient deployment of culverts to mitigate mortality of amphibians on roadways requires identification of locations within road networks where animals cross (hotspots), points within identified hotspots for culvert placement, and attributes of culverts that make them behaviorally palatable to migrating individuals. This study assessed road crossing frequency of spotted salamanders, *Ambystoma maculatum*, and American toads, *Anaxyrus americanus*, along a 700-m transect within a known crossing hotspot, and related these distributions to habitat variables within the hotspot including the presence of existing culverts. Also, experimental arrays of culverts of varying attributes were placed in the path of migrating spotted salamanders to examine culvert preference by salamanders under typical movement environments and appropriate animal behavioral states. Patterns of road occurrence demonstrated that both species avoided crossing where there was a wetland within 15 m of the downslope of the road and that neither species showed a strong preference for crossing near existing culverts. With regard to the choice for experimental culverts by spotted salamanders, no preference was seen for culverts of varying aperture size, length, or substrate. These results indicate that patterns of occurrences of the two species of amphibian within a crossing hotspot may be linked to the physical attributes at the site. For spotted salamanders in particular, predicting where they will cross within a hotspot may not be easy. Spotted salamanders showed little preference for culverts of different design, indicating that a variety of culvert designs can suffice for mitigation if placed in appropriate locations.

NESTING TURTLES IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

A. Bager and J. L. O. Rosado [2010, J. Herpetology 44(4): 658-662] analyzed nesting sites of three species of turtles, *Trachemys dorbignyi*, *Phrynops hilarii*, and *Hydromedusa tectifera*, from 1997 to 2002 at the Taim Ecological Station, in southern Brazil. The objective was to evaluate the size of the core habitat necessary to protect nesting sites of these species and to relate this information to Brazilian environmental legislation. *Trachemys dorbignyi* and *P. hilarii* have similar width of their nesting sites, 49.6 ± 36.3 m and 50.5 ± 30.4 m, respectively. *Hydromedusa tectifera* lays its eggs closer to the edge of waterbodies, on average at 12.6 ± 10.0 m. Curves were constructed to define the widths of the core habitats needed to protect 90% of the nests of each species. *Trachemys dorbignyi* requires 94 m of terrestrial habitat from the edge of waterbodies, *P. hilarii* requires 79 m and *H. tectifera* 24 m. In the study area, Brazilian legislation establishes a core habitat that is sufficient to protect the nests of these species around large waterbodies. However, because the protection areas are prescribed according to the width of the aquatic environments, this provision is insufficient for the majority of the aquatic environments in the region.

EFFECTS OF SUBLETHAL PESTICIDES

R. A. Relyea and K. Edwards [2010, Copeia 2010(4):558-567] note that pesticides commonly occur in ecological communities at relatively low concentrations, leading to growing interest in determining the sublethal effects of pesticides. Such effects should affect individuals and, in turn, alter interspecific interactions. This study sought to determine how sublethal concentrations (0.1 and 1.0 mg/L) of two common pesticides (carbaryl and malathion) affected predator and prey behavior as well as subsequent predation rates. The series of experiments used three species of larval amphibians (gray treefrogs, *Hyla versicolor*; green frogs, *Rana clamitans*; and American bullfrogs, *R. catesbeiana*) and three species of their predators (larval dragonflies, *Anax junius*; adult water bugs, *Belostoma flumineum*; and adult red-spotted newts, *Notophthalmus viridescens*). It was found that the pesticides frequently reduced the activity of all three tadpole species. For the two invertebrate predators (*Anax* and *Belostoma*), the pesticides were lethal, precluding examination of sublethal effects on predator–prey interactions. However, newt survival was high and the addition of the pesticides reduced the predation rates of newts in one of the three tadpole species. There were no effects of the pesticides on the striking frequency of the newts or on their prey capture efficiency. Thus, the mechanism underlying the pesticide-induced reduction in predation rates remains unclear. What is clear is that sublethal concentrations of pesticides have the potential to alter prey behavior and species interactions and thereby alter the composition of ecological communities.

CHIRONIUS TAXONOMY

J. Klaczko et al. [2010, Herpetologica 66(4):476-484] report that recently four subspecies of *Chironius multiventris* were recognized as valid distinct species: *C. m. foveatus*, *C. m. multiventris*, *C. m. cochranae* and *C. m. septentrionalis*. Although *C. foveatus* and *C. septentrionalis* clearly deserve specific status, a re-evaluation of the characters pointed in the literature as diagnostic of *C. multiventris* and *C. cochranae* does not support their recognition as valid distinct taxa. Additionally, the authors' analysis of the scutellation pattern, continuous characters, and hemipenial morphology of 34 specimens, and of the available data in literature, shows that there are no significant differences between them. They therefore suggest that *C. cochranae* should be synonymized with *C. multiventris*.

EGG ATTENDANCE IN A MADAGASCAN SNAKE

A. Mori and T. M. Randriamboavonjy [2010, Current Herpetology 29(2):91-95] note that maternal attendance of eggs is a parental care behavior widespread in snakes, but observations under natural situations are limited. During a radio-tracking study in a dry forest in Madagascar, the authors located a female Madagascan hog-nosed snake, *Leioheterodon madagascariensis*, that was attending a clutch of eggs in a cavity below ground. The late embryonic stage of an excavated egg and locations of the female recorded before its discovery with the clutch suggest that the female had been attending the eggs for a relatively long period but with occasional intervals when she left the oviposition site.

TURTLE NESTING AFFECTED BY INVASIVE REED

R. M. Bolton and R. J. Brooks [2010, Chelonian Conservation and Biology 9(2):238-243] report that a nonnative haplotype of *Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. ex Steudel has recently expanded its range to become a dominant invasive species in many areas of North America and has thereby become a conservation concern. It is highly aggressive and outcompetes surrounding vegetation by resource competition. Also, by successfully modifying the habitat, *P. australis* can displace native plant communities and negatively affect other organisms. *Phragmites australis* abundance has increased significantly at Long Point, Ontario, Canada, a highly sensitive area where 6 freshwater turtle species nest. At these high latitudes, turtles rely upon open, unshaded areas to provide adequate solar heat for nesting and select nest sites based on specific physical characteristics at the time of oviposition. The rapid expansion of *P. australis* has reduced suitable nesting habitat for many turtle species because the plants' growth during a season alters the microenvironment of turtle nests during incubation, particularly affecting nest temperature, the most important factor for embryo development. *Phragmites australis* is highly exploitative, and its uncontrolled invasion threatens the reproductive success of freshwater turtle species at Long Point and much of North America.

ECOLOGY OF SANDVELD LIZARDS

M. H. van der Meer et al. [2010, Copeia 2010(4):568-577] note that sandveld lizards (genus *Nucras*) are widespread in southern Africa, but are generally secretive and poorly known. The authors examined 385 preserved specimens from five species of *Nucras* collected over a broad time span (104 years) and a geographic area covering most of South Africa and Swaziland. There were three main objectives: to test for sexual size dimorphism, to quantify male and female reproductive cycles, and to determine diet. In addition, the importance of scorpions in the diet of *Nucras* was examined, based on previous studies reporting an unusually high incidence of scorpions in the diet of Kalahari *N. tessellata*. Males of all species except *N. lalandii* had significantly larger heads than females of the same body size, although females had significantly greater snout–vent length than males in three of the five species examined. The general reproductive pattern was for females to contain vitellogenic eggs during late spring and early summer. No females simultaneously contained oviductal and vitellogenic eggs, which suggests that females produce only one clutch per season. Clutch size was unrelated to female body size in all species examined. Female follicle volume generally coincided with male testicular volume, indicating for the most part synchronized reproductive cycles between the sexes. Testis volume was generally highest during spring–early summer, with only *N. holubi* showing a second peak in autumn. The study recorded 15 arthropod orders in the diet of *Nucras*. All species feed on invertebrates, primarily insects, and, to a lesser degree, spiders and centipedes. Termites, grasshoppers, and beetles both numerically and volumetrically dominated their diet. No evidence was found that scorpions form a major part of the diet of any of these five species of *Nucras*, including *N. tessellata* from biomes outside the Kalahari Desert.

Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, December 17, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 8:14 P.M. at the home of Deb Krohn. Board members Lawrence Huddleston, Andy Malawy, Linda Malawy, Jessica Tschampa and Jenny Vollman were absent.

Officers' Reports

Recording Secretary: Cindy Rampacek read the minutes of the November 12 board meeting, and they were accepted as read.

Treasurer: In the treasurer's absence, John Archer presented the November financial report, which was accepted.

Membership Secretary: Mike Dloogatch read a list of memberships expiring this month. The total of new memberships plus late renewals will greatly exceed the nonrenewals this month.

Corresponding Secretary: Deb Krohn reported little activity on the CHS voicemail this past month.

Sergeant-at-arms: The attendance at the November meeting was 47.

Committee Reports

Shows:
- Notebaert, January 1, 2.
- Great Lakes Pet Expo, February 5, 2011

Old Business

John Archer praised Jason Hood for running the November elections meeting as well as being the featured speaker, and congratulated Jason on being elected president for 2011.

New Business

December holiday meeting: Deb is unable to attend this year, so Linda Malawy and Cindy Rampacek will coordinate the refreshments.

Service awards: The awards will be handed out at the January 2011 general meeting.

John asked Cindy about the talk she recently gave in Las Vegas on the role of women in herpetoculture. John tried to talk Cindy into giving her talk at the December meeting, but she offered instead to be a fill-in speaker for whenever there is a slow month.

Various names were suggested as possible speakers for the coming year. John will get the speakers' names to Aaron as soon as they are confirmed, so that they can be posted on the CHS website.

Addresses for officers: John needs names and addresses for the corporation papers.

A new magnet idea was suggested. Cindy will get pricing.

Round Table

Jason has bouncing baby rainbow boas and they are biting him quite a bit.

Dick was disappointed that Jenny was not here to receive the baby bluetongue skink he brought for her. Dick said he enjoyed his time on the board, and will continue to come to as many meetings as possible.

Teresa Savino is resisting the urge to take on a baby bluetongue skink.

Deb thanked us all for coming and wished a Merry Christmas to all.

Jim Foster asked about one of Cindy's blogs.

Cindy had a great time in Vegas and enjoyed her behind-the-scenes at Mandalay Bay.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by recording secretary Cindy Rampacek

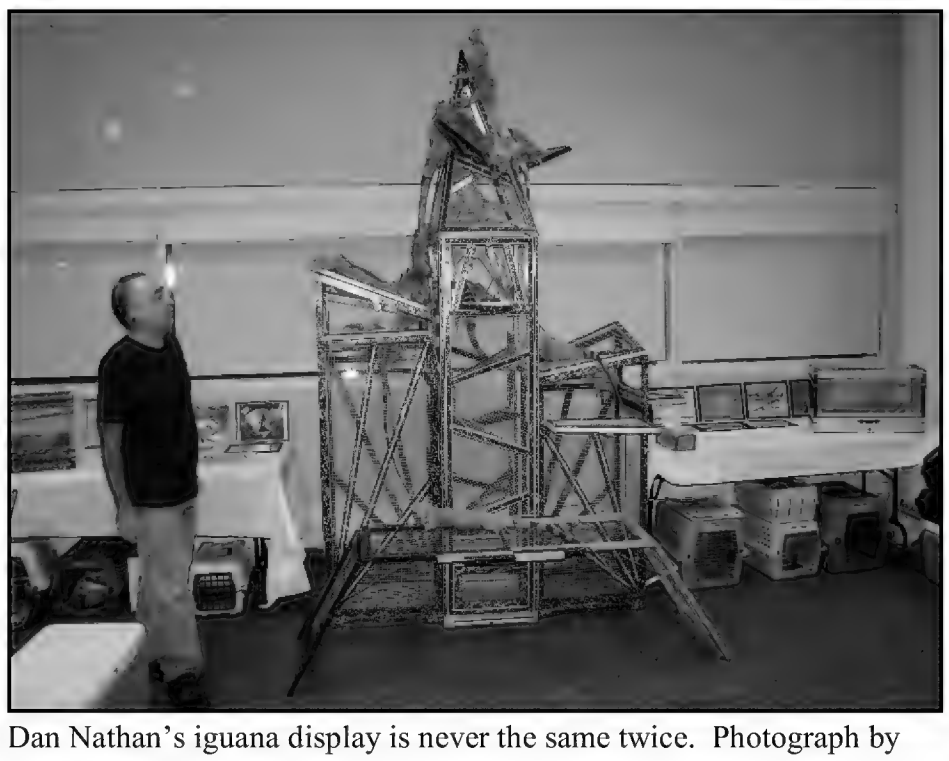
Scenes from the December Holiday Meeting

A beardless Bob Bavirsha caused a few double takes. Photograph by Rich Crowley.

Cindy Rampacek poses demurely with one of Rich Crowley's short-tailed pythons. Photograph by Rich Crowley.

One of Jason Hood's newborn Brazilian rainbow boas makes a new friend. Photograph by Dick Buchholz.

There was lots of good food and good conversation. Photograph by Dick Buchholz.



Dan Nathan's iguana display is never the same twice. Photograph by Dick Buchholz.

Life at the top. Photograph by Rich Crowley.

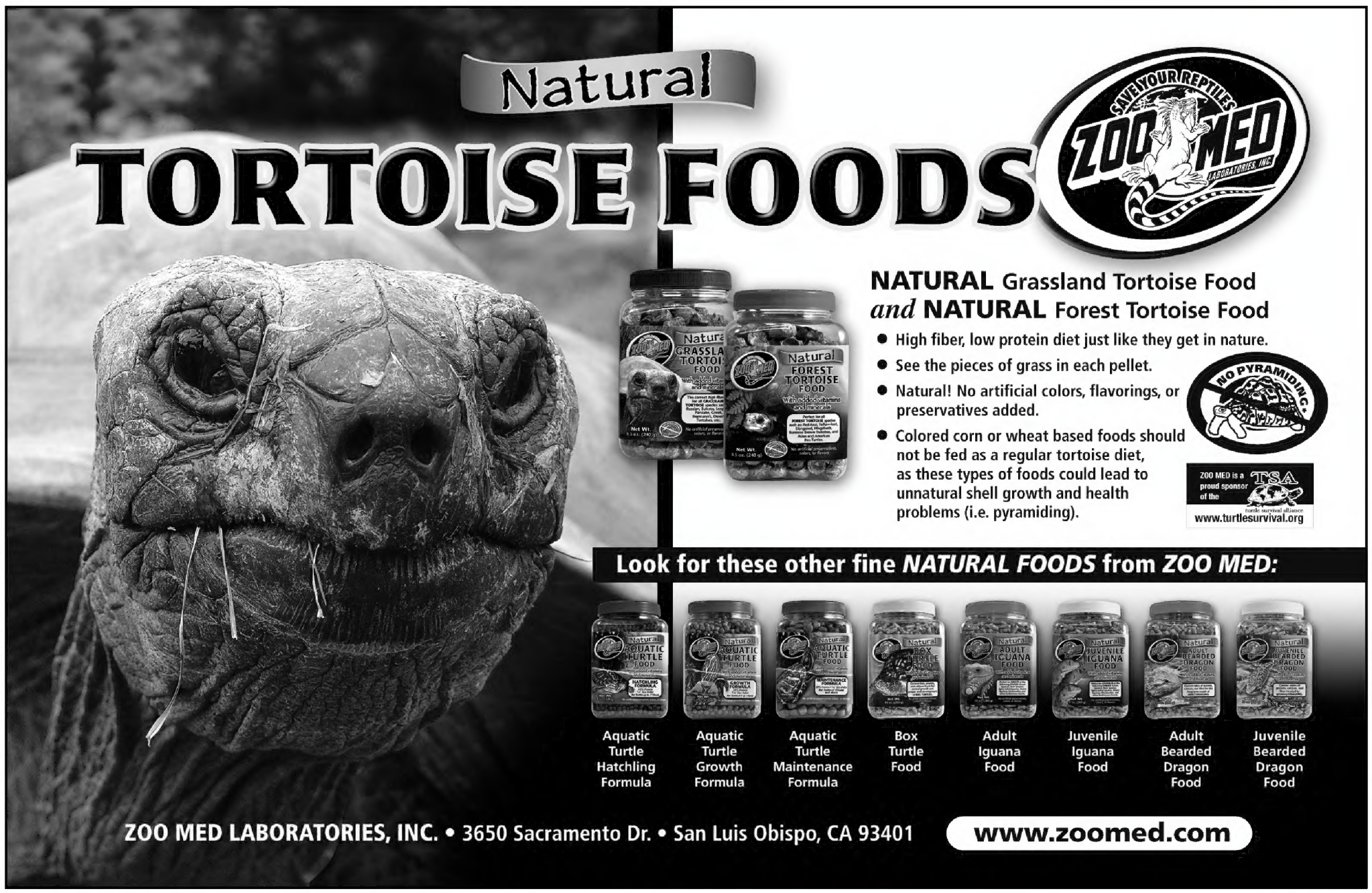
Chicago Herpetological Society
Income Statement: January 1 – December 31, 2010

Income		Expense	
Adoptions	$ 640.00	Adoptions	$ 1,133.87
Grants	162.00	Grants	4,998.90
Membership dues	13,374.20	Bulletin printing / mailing	18,158.30
ReptileFest	36,069.42	ReptileFest	27,559.83
Interest	47.35	Bank / PayPal fees	93.10
Other CHS shows	425.00	Conservation—Massasaugas	426.00
Merchandise sales	560.00	Awards	281.00
Donations (unrestricted)	277.00	Liability Insurance	5,193.00
Bulletin display ads	225.00	Library	20.00
Bulletin back issues	7.50	Licenses and Permits	81.00
Raffle	928.50	Postage	2,308.00
Miscellaneous	191.74	Office supplies	17.43
		Rent (storage)	240.00
		Speaker Reimbursement	1,725.21
		Telephone	209.40
		Miscellaneous	190.67
Total Income	$52,907.71	Total Expense	$62,635.71

Net Income ($9,728.00)

Chicago Herpetological Society
Balance Sheet: December 31, 2010

Assets	
Checking	$ 3,495.88
Money market	30,625.46
PayPal	890.90
Postage on deposit	382.51
Total Assets	$35,394.75
Equity	
Restricted – Adoptions	$ 6,476.49
Restricted – Grants	87.00
Retained Earnings	38,559.26
Net Income	(9,728.00)
Total Equity	$35,394.75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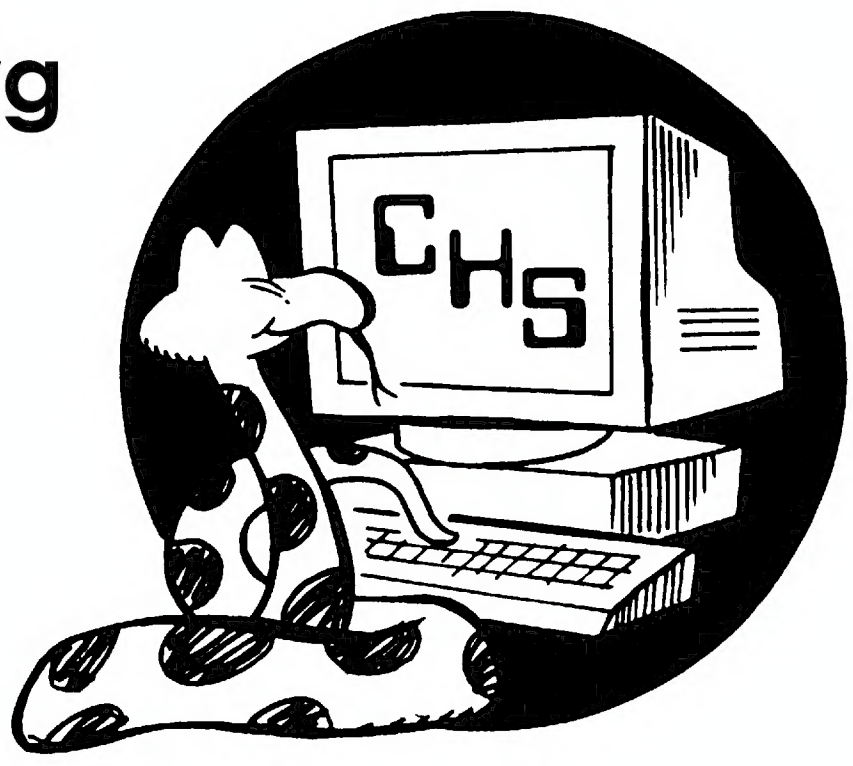
www.chicagoherp.org



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For sale: rats and mice—pinkies, fuzzies and adults. Quantity discounts. Please send a SASE for pricelist or call Bill Brant, *THE GOURMET RODENT*, 12921 SW 1st Rd, Ste 107-434, Jonesville, FL 32669, 352-472-9189, E-mail: GrmtRodent@aol.com.

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For sale: New book, 2011, just released: *Matamatas; The Natural History, Captive Care, and Breeding of* Chelus fimbriatus by David Fogel. The most comprehensive volume on this fascinating turtle. Well researched, 64 pages, with 49 literature citations. Well illustrated with 58 full-color photographs of captive specimens, their enclosures and filtration set-ups, wild specimens, and habitat. This book in the Turtles of the World Series will present readers with a look at the life of this amazing turtle in nature and in captivity. Enclosure designs, filtration details, and specific captive care requirements are included. Signed or personally inscribed and signed (provide instructions with order) copies are available from the author for $12.99 each plus shipping ($3.00 for the first copy & $1.00 each additional copy to US addresses, and $7.00 each for international destinations). Send check or money order to: David Fogel, 1750 Haines Road, Orwell, OH 44076. Payment through PayPal (including credit card payments) can also be accepted at herphouse1@aol.com. Please send any inquiries to this e-mail address.

For sale: Australian herp publications. Storr, G. M., Smith, L.A., and Johnstone, R. E.—*Lizards of Western Australia, Volume 3—Geckos & Pygopods*, 1990, 141 pp., 20 plates with 3 to 6 color photos each, drawings, range maps; description, distribution, derivation of scientific name, bibliography, scarce, (s), $75; Wet Tropics Management Authority—Color Poster of Wet Tropics Snakes, 16 × 23", 16 species including amethystine, water, spotted and jungle carpet pythons, rough-scaled snake, northern death adder, red-bellied blacksnake and taipan, 3 copies of same poster sent postpaid rolled in mailing tube, $18 for the 3; Couper, Patrick, and Amey, Andrew—*Snakes of South-east Queensland*, 2007, 68 pp., one or two color photos of each of the 56 species; pocket book size, published by Queensland Museum, a well done publication, (s), $16; Coventry, A. John, and Robertson, Peter—*The Snakes of Victoria*, 1991, 70 pp., many color photos, range maps, 6 figs., descriptions and natural history info, published by Museum of Victoria (Australia), (s), $35. All publications in excellent condition and offered subject to prior sale. $3 postage for orders under $25, free for $25 or more. William R. Turner, 7395 S. Downing Circle West; Centennial, CO 80122; e-mail: toursbyturner@aol.com.

For sale: Trophy quality jungle carpet, diamond-jungle, and jaguar carpet pythons. Website: moreliatrophyclub.com E-mail: junglejohn@tds.net.

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News and Announcements

BIOLOGY OF THE RATTLESNAKES SYMPOSIUM

The Chiricahua Desert Museum and the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum will be hosting the Biology of the Rattlesnakes Symposium 2011 in Tucson, Arizona, at the University Park Marriott, July 20–23, 2011. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Harry Greene; the banquet speaker will be Dr Jonathan Campbell. Persons interested in presenting papers at the meeting should contact Lori King Painter at loriguanid@aol.com; those interested in presenting posters should contact Matt Goode at mgoode@ag.arizona.edu.

For registration information, current list of speakers and other details go to www.biologyoftherattlesnakes.com

ReptileFest 2011, April 9, 10

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, January 27, at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Cannon Drive and Fullerton Parkway, in Chicago. **Ray Pawley**, retired curator of reptiles at Brookfield Zoo, who now makes his home near Hondo, New Mexico, will speak on "A New, One-of-a-kind Chicago Exotarium? Why Not?" Ray has the distinction of having been the only zoologist/curator who has managed the extensive herp collections at both Lincoln Park and Brookfield Zoos. Moreover, following his departure first from Lincoln Park and then from Brookfield, Ray witnessed the closure of both highly popular reptile houses. In Ray's view, these closings leave an enormous void in Chicagoland and as we know, Nature abhors a vacuum. So should we. Ray has served as a Zoo exhibits consultant from time to time at Lincoln Park Zoo, Shedd Aquarium and other Chicago area facilities during his tenure at Brookfield Zoo over the decades and these assignments have often provoked new ideas about creating a new, stand-alone herpetological facility in Chicago. Ray will share these ideas with us.

At the February 23 meeting, **Dr. Theresa L. Wusterbarth** of Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay will speak about her work on mating systems and sexual selection in natricine snakes.

The regular monthly meetings of the Chicago Herpetological Society take place at Chicago's newest museum—the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**. This beautiful building is at Fullerton Parkway and Cannon Drive, directly across Fullerton from the Lincoln Park Zoo. Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, from 7:30 P.M. through 9:30 P.M. Parking is free on Cannon Drive. A plethora of CTA buses stop nearby.

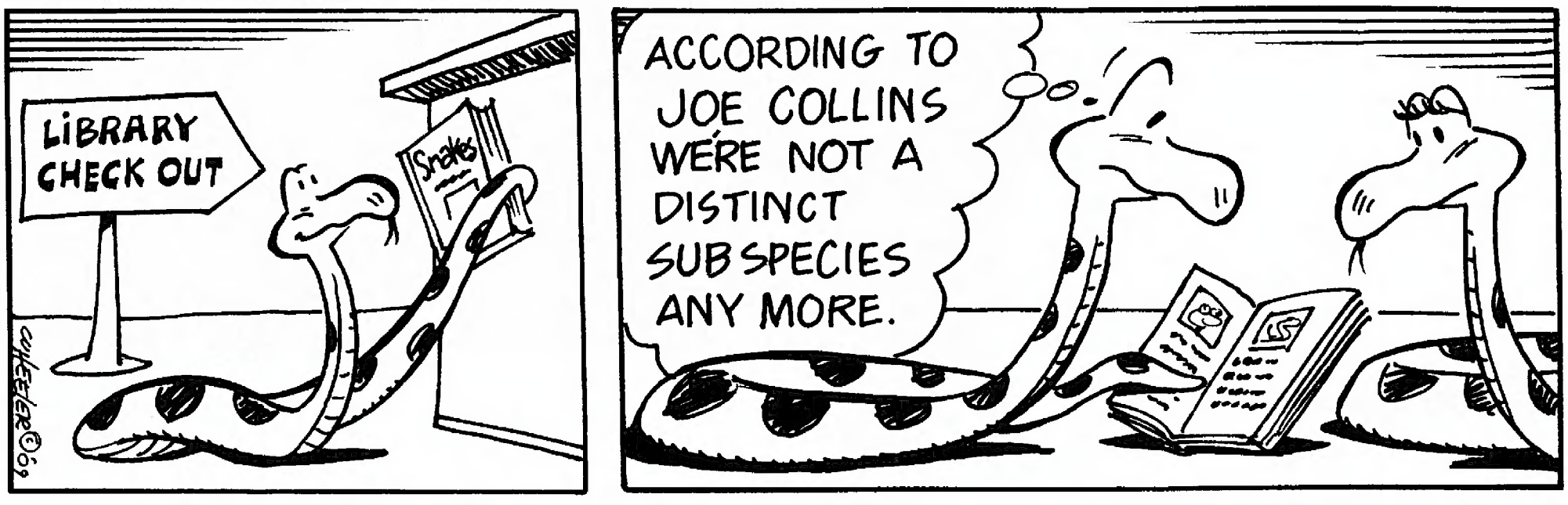
Board of Directors Meeting

Are you interested in how the decisions are made that determine how the Chicago Herpetological Society runs? And would you like to have input into those decisions? If so, mark your calendar for the next board meeting, to be held at 7:30 P.M., February 11, in the adult meeting room on the second floor of the Schaumburg Township District Library, 130 S. Roselle Road, Schaumburg.

The Chicago Turtle Club

The monthly meetings of the Chicago Turtle Club are informal; questions, children and animals are welcome. Meetings normally take place at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago. Parking is free. For more info visit the CTC website: http://www.geocities.com/~chicagoturtle.

THE ADVENTURES OF SPOT



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